(e) The objective to provide telephone connections on demand will be achieved with the participation of private sector complementing the efforts of the Government by the end of 9th Five Year Plan period.

Statement

State	Demand (as on)			Supply (Direct exchange lines (as on)		
	31.3.94	31.3.95	31.3.96	31.3.94	31.3.95	31.3.96
Bihar	238792	268541	322912	203248	247316	280431
Uttar Pradesh	667799	765420	928475	542303	658593	809929

[English]

Farakha Express

3091. SHRI RAM NAIK : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that the Farakha Express leaving Patna at night is fast going a dubious reputation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there are complaints against the travelling ticket examiners and other Railways staff; and

(d) if so, the steps taken/ proposed to be taken by the government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (d) Four cases of robbery/dacoity from passengers in Farakha Express train have been reported during the last six months. Law and Order being a State subject, the cases have been registered with Government Railway Police/Bihar.

Twenty nine complaints against TTEs/Conductors of different mail/express trains on Eastern Railway have been received relating to malpractices/irregularities committed by TTEs/Conductors, Coach Attendants etc. In view of the seriousness of the complaints and as a result of confronted enquiries, 24 members of the staff have been punished under Discipline & Appeal Rules.

In addition, regular and special checks are being conducted jointly by Vigilance, Security and Commercial Departments to check such malpractices. 157 such checks have been conducted on Eastern Railway and 48 members of staff have been held responsible during the period from April'96 to January, '97.

Renovation of Bashirhat Telephone Exchange

3092. SHRI AJAY CHAKRABORTY : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have not taken any positive action to change and renovate the existing telephone exchange of Bashirhat in 24 Parganas (North) West Bengal which is affecting adversely the services to telephone subscribers;

(b) whether the Government have also not taken action to connect the exchange with Calcutta telephones on a normal call charge;

(c) if so, the facts and details thereof; and

(d) the remedial measures proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) to (d) Bashirhat 700 lines strowger MAX-II Exchange has already been replaced to 1400 lines C-DOT Electronic Exchange on 13.3.96 and is working satisfactorily. Bashirhat & Calcutta belong to two different *SDCAs and as per policy of the Government calls from Bashirhat to Calcutta are charged at Normal STD rates applicable for the distance between the two.

*SDCA : Short Distance Charging Areas.

Report on Air Collision at Charkhi Dadri

3093. DR. Y. S. RAJASEKHARA REDDY : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Court of Inquiry appointed by the Government for formal investigation of mid-air collision near Charkhi Dadri in Haryana on November 12, 1996 has submitted its report;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the recommendations made; and

(c) if not, the time by which the report is likely to be submitted?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The term of the Court of Inquiry has been extended upto 15th May, 1997. It is not possible to indicate the date by which the report is likely to be submitted, at this stage.